

New resort developments tempt new and returning visitors

by KHALED RAMY, director UK & Ireland, Egyptian State Tourist Office

THE LAND that gave birth to the first great civilisation as well as iconic historical figures such as Tutankhamun and Cleopatra requires little introduction. The scope of Egypt is incredible and the stunning, the colossal monuments of Ancient Egypt never fail to astonish.

Travel agents' clients can enter an awesome world at the Pyramids of Giza, the Great Sphinx and in thousands of other temples and tombs from Aswan to Cairo. Whether your clients are fascinated by ancient history, interested in a romantic cruise down the Nile or simply in need of some recuperation surrounded by beautiful beaches and turquoise waters over on the Red Sea, then Egypt is the place.

Attracting thousands of visitors each year, Hurghada is one of Egypt's leading holiday resorts. Travel agents appreciate Hurghada for the short airport transfers to hotels and the wide choice of hotel accommodation to suit all budgets from three- to five-star and all-inclusive.

Hurghada is perfect for clients seeking total relaxation with fantastic weather and year-round warm sea temperatures. Famous for its superb diving, Hurghada is especially appealing to novice scuba divers who come to marvel at underwater reefs and marine life. Those interested in discovering this activity can learn how to dive at one of the various high quality dive schools.

Another tip is for agents to sell customers additional excursions or activities from Hurghada, such as a day trip to famous Luxor and the treasures of the Valley of the Kings or to the Sound and Light show at Karnak.

The tourist resort of El Gouna on Egypt's Red Coast is also well worth mentioning to clients, as even though it started out as a simple real estate project almost 20 years ago, it is now one of the coastline's flagship resorts.

The resort is built on 10km of secluded coastline, has 25,000 residents spread across islands and lagoons, and is the only fully fledged town on the Red Sea Riviera. The year-round sunshine destination boasts a world-class infrastructure including 16 hotels, 100 bars and restaurants, marinas, an 18-hole golf course and a variety of retail spa and fitness facilities. El Gouna also features award-winning architecture and the first hotels in Egypt to be awarded the Green Star Hotel Certification.

There have been some exciting new developments at the resorts including a new marina at El Gouna (an extension of the existing Abu Tig Marina which caters for vessels up to 60m long), new restaurants and new retail options to tempt new and returning travellers. In addition, two new hotels opened in El Gouna in November last year, with Ancient Sands due to open this December and a Four Seasons in 2014.

Another tip for agents selling Egypt is to suggest to clients to add-on a Nile cruise. Many clients may find it overwhelming when first choosing a cruise add-on and there is a huge range of choice from top end Oberoi luxury to smaller, more intimate journeys.

On a seven-day Nile Cruise, clients can experience some of the most important historic sites in Egypt, with visits to the West Bank of Luxor and the temples, columns and sights further along the Nile. In just a week, clients will spend mornings sightseeing with expert Egyptologists and afternoons relaxing, watching life along the world's most famous river, with time to explore the cities of Luxor and Aswan.

Additionally, there are a number of enticing coastal areas for clients looking for beach breaks including picturesque Madinat Makadi, Soma Bay and El Quseir.

For more information visit www.egypt.travel

A tip for agents selling Egypt is to suggest to clients to add on a Nile cruise